

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Committee to Review GSA's 'Networx' Proposal

New Federal Telecommunications Strategy Must Mesh With Modern Market

What: Full Committee Hearing, "Making Networx Work: Countdown to the RFP for the Federal Government's Telecommunications Program"

When: THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2005, 10:00 A.M.

Where: ROOM 2154 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

Background:

The General Services Administration is on the brink of issuing a request-for proposals (RFP) on its proposed government-wide voice and data telecommunications program, Networx. This program will determine which companies can offer local, long-distance and international phone services, wireless services, and other telecommunications products to federal agencies – services that federal agencies spent more than \$670 million on in fiscal 2003 alone.

Chairman Davis is keenly interested in making sure the GSA's acquisition strategy will be effective in today's dynamic telecommunications landscape, with its fast-changing technology and competitive marketplace.

"While GSA has made significant changes to the program, I'm not yet certain that it will become the 'best choice' for agencies as they design 21st century telecom plans," Davis said. "There are a lot of questions that still demand answers. Will Networx encourage the broadest possible participation from industry? Will GSA effectively cripple Networx with exorbitant management fees? Can GSA, so recently home to high-profile contract management challenges, provide the kind of leadership and management capability a program like Networx demands?"

This will be the third Committee hearing on Networx, with previous sessions held on February 26, 2004 and September 15, 2004. Since the announcement of the program in 2003, GSA has revised its strategy in response to comments from industry, agency customers, and this Committee, and this hearing will once again give Members of Congress and industry representatives a chance to publicly discuss the program. GSA has said it wants to issue the RFP next month, with awards made in April, 2006.

Networx is envisioned as a two-part program. The first part, known as Universal, will offer a full range of domestic and international network services. The second part, called Enterprise, is aimed at allowing participation by providers who offer fewer specialized services with less extensive geographic coverage than required by Universal.

In Chairman Davis's view, the key to success with Networx is for the GSA to take advantage of the wealth of information made available through its own requests-for-information, public comment on the proposed RFP, and the Committee hearings to establish a flexible telecommunications program based on current and future markets and evolving government needs. Prior federal telecommunications programs have established a strong technological base and good prices, but they may no longer provide an effective model for the government's future telecommunications needs.

Witnesses:

Panel One:

The Honorable Stephen Perry, United States General Services Administration

Mr. Perry will be accompanied by Ms. Barbara Shelton, Acting Commissioner, Federal Technology Service and Mr. John Johnson, Assistant Commissioner for Service Development and Delivery, Federal Technology Service.

Linda Koontz, Director, Information Management Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office

Panel Two:

Mr. Jerry Hogge, Senior Vice President, Level 3 Communications LLC

Mr. Robert Collet, Vice President – Engineering, AT&T Government Solutions

Ms. Shelly Murphy, President, Federal Markets, Verizon

Mr. Jerry A. Edgerton, Senior Vice President, Government Markets, MCI.

Mr. Jeffery Storey, CEO, WilTel Communications

Mr. Tony D'Agata, Vice President & General Manager, Sprint GSD

Panel Three:

Mr. Don Scott, Senior Vice President, EDS U.S. Government Solutions

Mr. David Bittenbender, Vice President, Network Services, Computer Sciences Corp, Federal Sector

Mr. James Courter, CEO and Vice Chairman IDT Corporation

Mr. Mike Cook, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Hughes Network Systems

Ms. Diana Gowen, President, Broadwing Government Solutions, Broadwing Communications LLC

Mr. Gregory Baroni, President, Global Public Sector, Unisys Corporation

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